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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
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SUBJECT: SYRIAN RELATIONS WITH ABU NIDAL AND THE PLO

REF: AMMAN 6461

11. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)

12. WE SPOKE ON JUNE 30 WITH JORDAN TIMES REPORTER LAMIS ANDONI (STRICTLY PROTECT), AUTHOR OF AN ARTICLE PRINTED ON JUNE 4 IN THE JORDAN TIMES THAT BROKE THE NEWS OF SYRIA'S CLOSURE OF THE DAMASCUS OFFICES OF THE ABU NIDAL ORGANIZATION. ANDONI IS ONE OF THE TOP ARAB REPORTERS OF PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS; SHE IS WELL CONNECTED WITH A WIDE RANGE OF SOURCES IN THE PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT, INCLUDING IN FATAH, THE PFLP, AND THE ABU NIDAL ORGANIZATION.

13. ANDONI PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL DETAILS ABOUT SYRIAN RELATIONS WITH THE ABU NIDAL ORGANIZATION:

- THE SOURCES FOR HER STORY IN THE JORDAN TIMES, LABELED IN THE ARTICLE AS "PALESTINIAN," INCLUDED MEMBERS OF FATAH, THE ABU NIDAL ORGANIZATION, AND "OTHERS" (WHICH WE ASSUME MEANS PFLP).
- THE ABU NIDAL SOURCES TOLD ANDONI THAT THEY REALIZED THEIR OFFICES IN DAMASCUS WERE UNDER SURVEILLANCE BY DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS THERE, SPECIFICALLY THE AMERICANS.
- FURTHERMORE, THE ABU NIDAL SOURCES SAID THAT THEY REALIZED DIPLOMATS IN SYRIA WOULD "DISBELIEVE" ACCOUNTS THAT SYRIA SEVERED ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH ABU NIDAL, BECAUSE OF THEIR PRESUMPTION THAT THE RELATIONSHIP WAS MORE INTIMATE THAN IN FACT IT WAS.
- THE ABU NIDAL SOURCES INSIST THAT THE CUT IS REAL; ANDONI BELIEVES THAT THIS IS THE RESULT OF SYRIAN SPONSORED ATTACKS ON THE PALESTINIAN CAMPS IN LEBANON, WHICH ABU NIDAL JOINED IN DEFENDING, AND A FEELING BY THE ABU NIDAL RANK AND FILE THAT THE MOVEMENT SHOULD BECOME CLOSER TO THE PLO AS A WHOLE.

14. ON SYRIAN RELATIONS WITH THE PLO, SPECIFICALLY FATAH, ANDONI SAID THAT RECENT SYRIAN-FATAH MEETINGS HAVE BEEN UNPRODUCTIVE. SHE CONFIRMED THAT PLO "FOREIGN MINISTER" QADDUMI HAD MET WITH SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SHARA' IN BRIONI IN EARLY JUNE, FOLLOWED BY MEETINGS BETWEEN FATAH SECURITY CHIEF ABU AL-HUL WITH TWO SENIOR SYRIAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS, MOHAMMAD NASSIF AND ADNAN RAM HAMDANI, IN CYPRUS. THE QADDUMI MEETING WITH SHARA' FOCUSED ON BROADER SYRIAN-PLO RELATIONS, WHILE THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS' MEETING FOCUSED ON LEBANON.

¶5. ANDONI PROVIDED A COUPLE OF BIOGRAPHIC DETAILS ON ABU NIDAL SPOKESMAN ATIF ABU BAKR. ABU BAKR UNTIL NOVEMBER 1984 WAS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PLO IN EASTERN EUROPE (SHE COULD NOT REMEMBER WHETHER IT WAS BELGRADE OR PRAGUE). HE THEN DEFECTED TO THE ABU MUSA DISSIDENT ORGANIZATION AND IN EARLY 1985 JOINED THE ABU NIDAL ORGANIZATION.

¶6. MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.

BOEKER